DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 101 HE 023 214

AUTHOR	Tayler, Marilyn; Jackson, Curtis
TITLE	Educational Opportunity Fund Legal Studies Program.
INSTITUTION	American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C.; Montclair State Coll., Upper Montclair, N.J.
SPONS AGENCY	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	89
GRANT	600-8440416
NOTE	10p.; This report is one of a group gathered by the AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project, funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. For related documents, see HE 023 199-261.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Affirmative Action; *Career Exploration; College Students; Computer Assisted Instruction; Higher Education; Honors Curriculum; *Legal Education (Professions); *Minority Groups; Models; Program Descriptions; Remedial Instruction; *Selective Admission; State Colleges; Student Recruitment; Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS	*AASCU ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project; Educational Opportunity Fund Legal Studies Program; *Montclair State College NJ

ABSTRACT

The Educational Opportunity Fund Legal Studies program addresses the need to increase access to careers in law for minority and disadvantaged students. Through early identification of interest, recognition of problems, remediation, skills enhancement, and comprehensive legal career exploration and exposure, students in Montclair State College's selective admissions program are prepared for law careers. The program has increased the pool of law school candidates from the target population, qualified on the basis of academic achievement and motivation. It also provides attractive career alternatives in the paralegal field and bilingual court interpretation. The curriculum uses a set of learning strategies to develop the needed critical reasoning, logical thinking, analytic problem-solving, writing and communication skills, and exposure to the legal professions early in the undergraduate education. The four components of this process are an individualized academic plan emphasizing the student's strengths, peer support and supplemental instruction to remediate academic weaknesses, computer-assisted instruction, and legal career exploration. (MSE)

ED316101

COVER PAGE

TITLE: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FUND LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM.

GRANTEE ORGANIZATION:

MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES
VALLEY ROAD & NORMAL AVENUE
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043

GRANT NO.: 600-8440416

PROJECT DATES:

STARTING DATE: AUGUST 1, 1984
ENDING DATE: DECEMBER 31, 1987

NUMBER OF MONTHS: 36

PROJECT DIRECTORS:

DR. MARILYN TAYLER, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES
DR. CURTIS JACKSON, DIRECTOR
INTRACOLLEGIATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE
VALLEY ROAD & NORMAL AVENUE
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043
201-893-4152, 4228

HE 023 214

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marilyn Tayler

Montclair State

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Legal Studies Program addresses the need to increase access to careers in law for minority and disadvantaged students. Through early identification of interest, recognition of problems, remediation, skill enhancement, and comprehensive legal career exploration and exposure, students in the Educational Opportunity Fund Program, Montclair State College's (MSC) special admission program, are prepared for competitive law careers. This Program has helped to insure an increased pool of law school candidates from the target population, qualified on the basis of academic achievement and motivation for admission to law school. It also provides attractive career alternatives in the paralegal field and bilingual court interpretation.

The EOF Legal Studies Program has implemented the "Learning Enhancement Process, an innovative set of learning strategies used to develop the requisite critical reasoning, logical thinking, analytical problem solving, writing and communication skills, as well as exposure to the legal professions as early as possible during a student's undergraduate college education. The "Learning Enhancement Process" has four significant and distinctive components; the Personalized College Plan, Honors Workshops, Computer-Assisted Instruction, and Legal Career Exploration and Exposure. These strategies are used to challenge the remediation cycle often found in special admissions programs.

INTRODUCTION\BACKGROUND

The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Legal Studies Program was developed to assist minority and disadvantaged students in reaching their academic potential by helping to prepare them for access to law school and the legal careers. The EOF Office, working in close cooperation with the Department of Legal Studies and the Office of Intracollegiate Academic Programs, realized that very few students from the special admissions programs at Montclair State College were taking advantage of the career opportunities available in the legal profession. Coupled with the reality that minority and disadvantaged groups have been historically under-represented in the legal profession, efforts were made to make the MSC Legal Studies Program more accessible to minority and disadvantaged students. This was accomplished through the implementation of the EOF Legal Studies Program.

Montclair State College was particularly suited to offer a preparatory program for special admit students interested in legal careers. The College's Department of Legal Studies provides the dual possibilities of preparation for an ultimate career as an attorney or an applied career in law as a paralegal. In addition to its Pre-Law Studies Program, Montclair State College (MSC) is also the only four-year college in New Jersey with a Paralegal Studies Program which has received the approval of the American Bar Association, thereby providing a career alternative within the legal field. The Department of Legal Studies also provides statewide leadership in the New Jersey Legal Interpretation Project.

Funding for the Program was provided through a three-year grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Educational Opportunity Fund, the New Jersey Department of Higher Education's Fund for the Improvement of Collegiate Education, IBM, the Prudential Foundation, and several major law book publishers.

The innovative project strategies developed to date were not envisioned when the Program was first conceived. Originally, EOF Legal Studies students were provided with small-group instruction, limited computer-assisted instruction, and legal career counseling services. The strategies originally planned and utilized had their beginnings in the same "remediation cycle" which has dominated services to special admissions students for decades. Through three years of research, trial and error, and Program refinement incorporating the input of staff, consultants and evaluators, the Project has grown to its present level of sophistication. The implementation of the four key Project components has demonstrated that innovative learning strategies will enhance possibilities for ultimate student success.

DESCRIPTION

The EOF Legal Studies Program has developed the Learning Enhancement Process, a unique set of learning strategies, used as the tool to prepare students for the competitive activities that are inherent in legal careers. The major goal of the Learning Enhancement process is to assist each student through a succession of program activities to achieve his or her maximum potential. This goal is achieved through the implementation of the four program components:

THE PERSONALIZED COLLEGE PLAN: a plan written to assist the student in mastering college-level courses through the development of specific goals and objectives. One of the major functions of the PCP is the identification of the student's learning strengths. These strengths are then used to overcome particular weaknesses in academic areas. It serves as a conduit through which the range of opportunities available is tailored to the needs of the individual student. Counseling services facilitate the process by providing the student with the appropriate guidance necessary for successful completion of his or her personalized goals.

THE HONORS WORKSHOP: a liberal arts adaptation of the University of California at Berkeley's Professional Development Program, which employs peer support through supplemental instruction to promote academic excellence.

COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION: strategies which employ the fruits of high technology to refine the skills that students need for maximum academic achievement through the use of interactive software.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND LEGAL EXPOSURE: these experiences provide students with up-to-date information on scholarships, admissions criteria, and preparation for the Law School Admissions test. Also included are structured field trips, a mentor program which exposes students to role models, career opportunities and hands-on legal experience.

The strategies for each of these project components are implemented through the work of a coordinated team of professionals trained to challenge the remediation cycle . The team consists of the Project Coordinator, Counselor/Learning Enhancement Specialist, Computer-Assisted Instruction Specialist and an Educational Development Specialist. The professional team approach is used to share responsibility for creating an environment which fosters academic excellence. In certain instances, the team may also include professionals such as representatives of various college resource programs, class

instructors and others who are involved in a particular student's progress. Through the combined efforts of this professional staff, the students are guided through a succession of program activities designed to enhance the student's academic skills as well as widen his or her awareness of career opportunities and job readiness skills.

PROJECT RESULTS

The Educational Opportunity Fund Legal Studies Program challenges remedial techniques to assisting minority and disadvantaged students and provides instead a novel approach promoting academic excellence and the development of leadership skills. This is being accomplished through:

- Innovative Learning Enhancement Strategies, which includes a process for planning and implementing individualized educational goals and objectives through the use of the Personalized College Plan prepared with the student.

- The Honors Workshop, the only liberal arts adaptation of the University of California, Berekeley's Professional Development Program model where peer support is used to promote academic excellence.

- Computer-Assisted Instruction, which employs the fruits of high technology to refine the skills that students need for maximum academic achievement through the use of interactive software.

- Legal Exposure, which provides students with information on scholarships, admissions criteria, and the Law School Admissions test. It also includes structured field trips and a Mentor Program which exposes students to role models, career opportunities and on-hands legal experience.

The direct consequences of the Program are the services provided to students. The learning enhancement process provides students with a process for planning and implementation of individualized educational goals and objectives through the use of the Personalized College Plans prepared with students.

All of our students do not choose to go on to pursue legal careers. Many of them take one or two courses in the Minors (Paralegal or Pre-Law) and decide that they do not want to pursue legal careers. The study of law is not for everyone. However, the Program is meeting its goal of exposing minority and disadvantaged students to career opportunities in the legal profession as well as preparing these students to meet the rigorous academic demands of the legal profession. Many of our students did not think that a legal career was an obtainable goal. Their past academic history may not have prepared them for the

competitive atmosphere of a legal curriculum. Through services provided under the learning enhancement process and exposure to the two different minor programs offered by the Department for Legal Studies, students are informed of the requirements necessary to enter the legal profession and are counseled to alternative career options. Even in the case of students who go on to other careers, they have learned invaluable lessons in the legal process, critical thinking, writing, reasoning, maturation, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Many of our students are unsure of the depth of their interest in the legal field. For those students, we advise them to take one or two courses in the Paralegal Minor to test their interest. The Paralegal Studies Minor is not an automatic steeping stone to a career as an attorney. Students who are interested in a career as an attorney may be advised to try one or two courses in the Pre-Law Minor. The Paralegal Studies Minor is recommended for the student who may want to attend law school but would like to prepare for an alternative career in law in case they decide not to attend law school or are not accepted into law school. This is a very attractive alternative for many of our students who must obtain employment upon graduation. It allows the students to support themselves in a law-related career while attending law school.

Students entering the EOF Program are exposed to the Legal Studies minors as early as their freshman year. What may be one of the most important indicators of thee Program's success is its institutionalization into Montclair State College and the impact the Program has in the community at large. Outreach is accomplished through the dissemination of information concerning the Program to high schools, community colleges, law schools and other legal liaisons. In addition, liaisons with Law School Admissions Personnel are maintained to provide students with up-to-date information on admissions criteria, financial aid and the Law School Admissions Test.

As a result of the number of inquiries received about the EOF Legal Studies Program, a descriptive handbook was planned for wholesale replication of the model. After three years of project development, the handbook has evolved into a comprehensive manual entitled "Challenging the Remediation Cycle: The Learning Enhancement Process". This Manual acts as a guide for other institutions to adapt Project components or to adopt the program in its entirety. The Manual integrates the four strategies and discusses in detail the application of a holistic approach to meet the needs of the students. Other institutions of higher education can benefit from the dissemination of the model developed at Montclair State College by using the Manual as a vehicle for implementation.

Summary

The EOF Legal Studies Program has been successful in a number of

areas:

- EOF student enrollment has grown from 32 students in Spring 1985 to over 70 students as of Spring 1989
- Eight students have entered law school
- While no EOF students obtained paralegal certificates prior to 1986, eleven students have obtained the certificate as of Spring 1988
- The EOF Legal Studies coordinator teaches within the the Legal Studies Department and is a member of the Departments appeal committee
- The EOF Legal Studies Program manual entitled, "Challenging the Remediation Cycle: The Learning Enhancement Process", was circulated to all EOF programs within the state and to various MSC institutional offices
- Presentations on the Program have been made to several professional organizations
- In addition, the project was instrumental in providing seed funding for New Jersey Legal Interpretation Project, which provides in-depth training for bilingual persons to serve as translators and interpreters in the legal area

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The EOF Legal Studies Program at Montclair State College has implemented the first pre-law undergraduate program which responds to the needs of minority and disadvantaged students seeking access to legal careers. It is anticipated that this Program will continue to impact on a significant number of students in our target populations, which will ultimately increase the qualified applicant pool of heretofore under-represented minority and disadvantaged candidates for law school by investing resources in recruiting, admissions and education at the undergraduate level.